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IDEALIST

IDEA 3004  
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March 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: BACKWASH

25X1A  
1. [ ] advised, by telephone, that indications are that the aircraft was over stressed causing the left wing to fall about 12 to 18 inches outboard from the wing root. This failure was followed by a fairly severe pitch up which probably caused the engine mounts to fail and the rest of the aircraft came apart at that time.

2. There are several factors which may have contributed to the structural failure. The fact that the aircraft was indicated approximately 210 knots at 35,000 feet in a position of a climbing right turn with empty main fuel tanks and fuel in the auxiliary fuel tanks may have contributed to the initial failure. With fuel in the auxiliary tanks and empty main tanks the rigidity of the wing is affected. Added to this is the unknown force applied by the use of the right aileron at the same time. While the critical G force at the portion of the wing which failed is stated to be 4.5, it seems unlikely that any qualified pilot would apply 4.5 G to this aircraft. It may follow that the conditions noted above have reduced the force required to cause structural failure to a sufficient degree that the maneuver resulted structural failure.

25X1A  
3. It is my understanding that as a result of the above information, which was passed to Gen. Geary, by phone, by [ ], the Air Force has released their U-2 aircraft for flight and are no longer interested in a special inspection to be performed at OL-20.

4. The above information is not official and should not be used to make decisions regarding the accident.

[ ]

Colonel USAF  
Deputy for Field Activities, OSA

GROUP 1  
Excluded from automatic  
downgrading and  
declassification

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